



AT A GLANCE: ASTHMA



THE BASICS

- Asthma is a chronic condition affecting the airways of the lungs.
- The airways swell and narrow, producing more mucus and making it difficult to breathe.
- Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled with proper medical diagnosis, management, and adherence to a treatment plan.



NURSING CONSIDERATIONS

- Familiarize yourself with the asthma action plan and emergency protocols (should be updated annually)
- Foster and encourage independence when appropriate, including self-carrying and self-administration of quick-relief medications
- Communicate closely with faculty, staff, relevant HCPs, and parents regarding expectations, care plans, and emergency procedures
- Advocate for full participation in school and all school activities
- Educate the school community about asthma, including training of staff
- If available, consider stocking undesignated quick-relief asthma medication
- Be diligent in documentation



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Difficulty breathing/Wheezing
- Cough
- Chest pain/tightness
- Shortness of breath
- Retractions
- Nasal Flaring
- Rapid breathing
- Tachycardia



COMMON TRIGGERS

- Allergies
- Inhaled irritants
- Exercise Illness/Infection
- Animals
- Weather



SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS

- Reduce allergens & irritants in the school setting
- Provide activity restrictions and allowances
- Accommodate for testing, as needed during flare-ups
- Ensure access to rescue medication including on school-sponsored trips
- Recognize the emotional/mental health effects of asthma and establish appropriate support